

News Release

For Immediate Release

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SEED HEARINGS SET TO BEGIN MARCH 17

The Mississippi Seed Arbitration Council, a division of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC), announced today that hearings on two types of seeds will begin at 8 a.m. Tuesday, March 17, 1998 in Jackson. The hearings involve a cotton seed known as “Roundup Ready” cotton and a soybean that some farmers claim is infected with the mosaic virus. 50 claims against the cotton seed manufacturer will be heard, as well as 12 claims against the soybean manufacturer. Two claims against the cotton seed manufacturer were dismissed because farmers withdrew their petition.

The Seed Arbitration Council has also decided:

- Each of the 62 cases will be handled individually, as opposed to a consolidated hearing
- Hearings will rely on testimony only – council will not grow a “test plant” under laboratory conditions as part of the investigation
- Each side (farmer & seedman) will have 1 hour to present their case
- Each side can call as many witnesses as possible within time frame
- All hearings will be held at Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson
- Cotton hearings begin March 17; soybean hearings begin March 18
- Council will notify farmers of the date and time of their hearing

The Mississippi Seed Arbitration Council is authorized by law to mediate disputes between farmers and seedmen over seed quality. Because the council acts as arbitrator, no attorneys are allowed to represent either side at the hearings. The council will hear all testimony and render a decision on whether the seeds in question are defective or not. The council’s decision is not binding. However, farmers are unable to take legal action against seedmen, if desired, until the council has reached a decision.